

Whereas the position currently held by Lieutenant General Boykin requires him to interact routinely with Muslims from all over the world;

Whereas Lieutenant General Boykin has failed to retract his remarks or to issue a full apology for those controversial and divisive statements;

Whereas the remarks made by Lieutenant General Boykin have impaired the image of the United States worldwide and threaten to endanger United States forces in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

Whereas such remarks by a high-ranking military official undermine the war on terrorism by insulting Muslim allies of the United States and Muslim citizens of the United States, including those Muslim citizens in the United States Armed Forces: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) condemns bigotry and intolerance against any religious group, including people of the Islamic faith; and

(2) calls on the President—

(A) to clearly censure Lieutenant General William Boykin, United States Army, for his religiously intolerant remarks against people of the Islamic faith; and

(B) to reassign Lieutenant General Boykin to a new position in which his views will not impact United States Government policy decisions toward Muslims.

HOW IS A SURGEON TO SURVIVE IN BUSINESS?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PORTER). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise again this week as I have done in previous weeks to call attention to declining Medicare reimbursement for physicians. Effective January 1, 2004, physicians and other providers paid pursuant to the Medicare physician fee schedule face at least a 4.2 percent cut in reimbursements.

For nearly 40 years, Medicare has provided necessary health care to those millions of patients across this country. Another steep cut in reimbursement rates is now forcing many physicians who care for Medicare patients to make very difficult choices. Complicating the situation, Mr. Speaker, further, is the fact that doctors in some areas are experiencing double and even triple-digit percentage increases of their liability premiums. In a host of States, like my State of Georgia, surgeons are scrambling to find affordable liability insurance, if it is available at all.

When doctors are forced out of practice, patient access to care is further compromised. Fewer doctors overall translates into greater difficulty obtaining an appointment for every patient but especially those who rely on Medicare.

Earlier this year we passed H.R. 5, the HEALTH Act to combat the problem of increased liability premiums at the Federal level. Unfortunately, this commonsense legislation has now languished in the Senate. I reiterate my support for this bill, and I urge its

swift passage by the entire Congress so that President Bush can sign it into law this year.

Until that time, however, one of the main costs of running a medical practice for many high-risk specialists, including general surgeons, will continue to be liability insurance. Looking at this chart, you can easily see that increases in liability premiums have grossly outpaced Medicare reimbursement.

Using information collected by the independent trade publication Medical Liability Monitor, this chart compares the average liability premiums for general surgeons to the Medicare physician payment update. In 2001, physicians received a 5.1 percent Medicare payment update. During that same period liability premiums increased 14.6 percent. Then the next year Medicare physician payments were cut 5.4 percent. While doctors are trying to manage this cut, their liability premiums spiked to an additional 29 percent. There is no doubt that at least with respect to liability premiums, Medicare reimbursement continues to fall far behind the cost of doing business.

As an OB/GYN myself, I can assure you that a physician's practice is indeed a small business. When faced with decreasing income and soaring expenses, doctors cannot simply increase the cost of patient visits. To keep medical practices open, doctors make tough choices. Some doctors delay the purchase of new equipment; others reduce the size of the staff. Many increase the percentage of non-Medicare patients they see, leaving insufficient time in a busy schedule to see a sufficient number of Medicare patients.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to relay a story that demonstrates just how the cuts in physician reimbursements are affecting medical practices in my home State of Georgia. Dr. Harry Sherman, former president of the Georgia chapter of the American College of Surgeons, has lived in Georgia for more than 70 years. He remembers when Congress first enacted Medicare. Now, about 40 percent of his surgical patients are Medicare.

I recently had an opportunity to speak with Dr. Sherman at the American College of Surgeons annual meeting in Chicago. During our conversation, it became clear to me that Dr. Sherman obtains a great deal of personal satisfaction from treating Medicare patients.

As a physician myself, I understand that unique bond that develops between doctor and patient, but as the cost of doing business continues to increase and the level of reimbursement drops, further and further, he admits that it influenced his decision about when to retire.

Dr. Sherman is one of Georgia's most seasoned surgeons. He was born and raised in Georgia, and is truly an asset to his community and his patients. When continued Medicare payment cuts are forcing good surgeons like Dr.

Sherman to retire for financial reasons, something is badly wrong.

One of the greatest achievements of the Medicare program is the access to high-quality care it has brought to our Nation's seniors and disabled patients. This level of access cannot be expected to continue in the face of deep Medicare cuts and growing liability premiums.

Mr. Speaker, doctors are the linchpin of the Medicare system. Let us not force them out of the system. Stop the 4.2 percent Medicare physician cut; help doctors help those who need their care the most.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

OXI DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MALONEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, today I join people of Greek descent in Astoria, New York, the country, and the world in saluting the courageous acts of the Greeks against Mussolini and Hitler.

October 28, 2003, marks the 63rd anniversary of a very historic day in Greek history. On October 28, 1940, the Italian Minister in Athens gave an ultimatum to the Prime Minister of Greece, demanding the unconditional surrender of Greece. His answer was "Oxi," which means "no" in Greek.

Military success for the Italians would have sealed off the Balkans from the south and helped Hitler's plan to invade Russia. In fact, the Italian army was fully equipped, well supplied, and backed by superior air and naval power. They were expected to overrun Greece within a short time. Fortunately, the Greek Army proved to be well trained and resourceful despite their lack of military equipment.

In less than a week after the Italians first attacked, it was clear that their forces had suffered a serious setback in spite of having control of the air and fielding armored vehicles. On November 14th, the Greek Army launched a counteroffensive and quickly drove Italian forces far back into Albania. On December 6th, the Greeks captured Porto Edda and continued their advance along the seacoast toward Valona. By February 1, 1941, the Italians had launched strong counterattacks, but the determination of the Greek Army coupled with the severity of the winter weather, nullified the Italians' efforts.

The Italians launched another offensive on March 12, 1941, but after six days of fighting, the Italians made only small gains, and it became clear that German intervention was necessary if the Italians were going to win.

On March 26th, Hitler declared that he would make a clean sweep of the Balkans. It took him five weeks, until the end of April, to subdue Greece. It turned out to be an important five weeks. These five weeks delayed Hitler's invasion of Russia and contributed to the Germans' failure in Russia.

The victory of the Greek Army against the Italians astonished the world. The heroic stance by the Greeks against insurmountable odds, was the first glimmer of hope for the Allies, and today we can take great pride in those who risked their lives to defend their country.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WATERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WATERS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PASS THE FALLEN PATRIOTS TAX RELIEF ACT, H.R. 3365

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MCCOTTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge passage of the Fallen Patriots Tax Relief Act, H.R. 3365, which has been introduced by the distinguished gentleman from Arizona (Mr. RENZI). Contemporaneous with the Persian Gulf conflict, Congress increased from \$3,000 to \$6,000, the military death gratuity payable to the survivors of deceased members of our Armed Forces.

Unfortunately, unlike the original \$3,000 benefit, this additional \$3,000 to the survivors of our fallen patriots was left exposed to taxation. This cannot continue. The Fallen Patriots Tax Relief Act will restore the military death gratuity to its rightful and tax exempt status and increase the military death gratuity for survivors of our fallen patriots up to a total of \$12,000, retroactively effective to September 11, 2001.

Mr. Speaker, of course, so many today are tempted to measure their compassion in money. Let us make no mistake, no amount of money will mute or diminish these survivors' immeasurable pain, an immeasurable pain which can only be told by the mounting of time and the mercy of God.

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Yet, still in support of and in tribute to our fallen and their families, our hu-

manitarianism compels us to try. Consequently, in support of our troops and their families our words are prolific.

Now, during this current Persian conflict, our deeds must best our rhetoric. It is the least and not the last we must do for those who have so terribly sacrificed and suffered for our freedom, for our country, for us.

FALLEN PATRIOTS TAX RELIEF ACT OF 2003

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PORTER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. RENZI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by recognizing the steadfast leadership provided by my colleagues, especially the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) who has fought for this legislation, for this issue, for over 2 years, as well as the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), who without their original initiatives, the Fallen Patriots Tax Relief Act would not have become a reality and gained such bipartisan support. In addition, I want to thank them for their guidance on this bill and their strong cooperation in drafting this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3365, the Fallen Patriots Tax Relief Act of 2003, addresses the death gratuity paid to a survivor of a military member of the United States, which historically has been exempt from taxation. An oversight in the Tax Code after gratuity was increased to \$6,000 left half of this payment subject to taxation. The benefit was designed to assist survivors of deceased members of the military with their financial needs during the period following the soldier's death and before other survivor benefits become available.

The first section of this legislation raises the death gratuity payment to \$12,000. This increase has already been funded in the Defense Appropriations Act recently signed into law.

The second section of this bill amends the U.S. Tax Code to restore the payment to its historical full tax exempt status. This provision applies to deaths occurring on or after September 11, 2001, in order to provide for the families of those military personnel who lost their lives at the onset of the war on terrorism.

At a time when our Nation's sons and daughters and their families are making great sacrifices on behalf of this Nation, it is unconscionable to ask them to shoulder a tax burden on a gift intended to be free from taxation.

What is most important to remember when considering this significant legislation is that this bill will help families with the loss of their loved ones; the death gratuity payment must remain as a gift to the surviving family as a gesture of a grateful Nation and be done in a manner which dignifies their ultimate sacrifice.

The bipartisan support on this legislation shows that Congress recognizes the sacrifices made by these men and women of our Armed Forces against the war on terror.

What motivated me to become involved are three of our fallen patriots from my district in rural Arizona. The first was Spencer Karol, a 20-year-old Army Specialist with the 165th Military Intelligence Battalion from Holbrook, Arizona. Spencer was raised in California until his family moved to Holbrook while he was a junior in high school. He graduated from Holbrook High in 2001 and signed up with the Army with two of his friends. They were sent to Iraq this year.

Specialist Karol's mother, Bridget, a single mother, depended on her son for assistance, and he did so willingly. She said, "He helped me with his younger brothers. I, being a single mother, needed help on our ranch fixing roofs, putting up fences, clearing brush, with the livestock and he did all of it on his own without ever having to be told."

When he was not helping his mother in caring for his little brothers he was involved in community service activities that included helping the Hashknife Sheriff's Posse. His mom said he was also good with computers and worked a short time in the Navajo County Assessor's Office before going off to boot camp. She said he liked music and that Spencer was a gentleman. He liked to play the guitar and piano and was loved by his family and community.

Specialist Karol died when his vehicle was hit by an explosive device on patrol while looking for enemy combats on October 6, 2003, at Ar Ramadi, Iraq. This legislation gives Spencer Karol's mother the ability to cover the funeral expenses to bury her son.

Secondly, Private Lori Piestewa of the much-publicized 507th Maintenance Division was the first Native American woman on record known to be killed in action in our Nation's history. As a testament to her proud Hopi Indian warrior tradition, Lori went back into the thick of battle outside of An Nasirah, Iraq, to help her fellow soldiers, including Private Jessica Lynch, escape an Iraqi ambush. Lori was a 23-year-old single mother of two. She has a mountain and freeway named after her in Arizona, but her family still pays taxes on the payment they received from Lori's sacrifice.

This legislation corrects this injustice and gives her children added support.

Finally, 27-year-old Army Specialist Alyssa Peterson was a great athlete and graduated at the top of her class. She was good with languages and gracious to her family and friends.

I would like to share with you an essay that this bright, energetic young woman wrote when she was in fifth grade as a student at Sechrist Middle School in Flagstaff, Arizona.

Alyssa wrote, "What is an American patriot? I believe an American patriot